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New London Day Op-Ed
Register to Vote and Get Educated About our New Voting Machines
By
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The Presidential campaign that has been building for at least the last two years is now finally upon us: in about 10 days, voters in Connecticut and nationwide will go to the polls for perhaps the most historic election since 1932.

With an economic crisis not seen since the Great Depression and American troops fighting two foreign wars simultaneously, whomever voters choose as the next President will have profound bearing on the course we take as a country for generations.

In Connecticut, not only are we electing a President but all of our 5 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives are on the ballot, and so are all 187 seats in the Connecticut General Assembly. We also have dozens of races for registrar of voters and other local offices as well as two constitutional questions on the ballot.

That's why I am urging you not to miss out on the opportunity to participate in such an important national decision that will have a tremendous impact around the globe.

My message is simple: Register to vote. Get educated about Connecticut's new optical scan voting system. And last but not least – get to the polls on November 4th between 6:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. and make your voice heard!

Already in 2008, I have seen a tremendous surge of interest in this election as reflected in our state's voter registration numbers. Since January 1st just about 220,000 people have become newly registered voters in Connecticut. Most inspiring from that figure: more than 91,000 of these new voters are between the ages of 18 and 29.

Traditionally, this is the most challenging age group to interest in our civic process. But what the statistics tell me is something I have been seeing in the faces of our young people as I travel around the state and speak to schools about the importance of voting. At a time of economic

upheaval, a global war on terror, environmental peril and a crossroads on energy policy, our nation's future leaders clearly want a say in the direction of this country.

Even with the heightened interest in the 2008 elections, however, my office estimates that a full 60% of Connecticut's registered voters still have not used our state's new optical scan voting technology. It's a very easy and secure method chosen in 2006 to replace the ancient lever ballot voting machines. The system was used very successfully by our state in the 2007 municipal elections and during our Presidential preference primary in February.

To find out more about our new voting machines, our new vote-by-phone system and to download voter registration forms, visit www.vote-EZ-CT.com and see how easy it is to cast your ballot in Connecticut.

Now before I conclude, I am reminded of what an old political hand once said, "Never let 'em leave without asking for their votes." So I am asking and strongly encouraging you to make sure you are registered so you can vote on Election Day.

Any registration forms sent in the mail to your local registrar's office must be postmarked no later than Tuesday October 21st. If you miss that deadline, you have until Tuesday October 28th at 8:00 p.m. to register to vote in person at your town hall.

I expect turnout to be extremely high in Connecticut. The last two presidential elections have brought about 80% of Connecticut's registered voters to the polls. In 2008, this figure could easily be 90% and might even break our all-time voter turnout record of 93% set in 1960 when John F. Kennedy narrowly defeated Richard Nixon.

That was an election that shaped history for generations. And so will 2008. Make your voice heard on November 4th. Register to vote. And get to the polls!